

WWD

VIOLA
MILLER'S
WEEKLY
WRAP UP
11/11/05



MID-CUMBERLAND GREETING: The CSAs making the switch over to DCS. 'Great turnout, and we're happy to have them,' said Frank Mix.

SOUTHEAST TO COMMISSIONER: CQI WORKS

When we took on the overdue EPSDT screenings as a project about a year ago, we ran the report and had over 30 that were out of compliance. We decided that the basic problem was lack of communication and understanding between DCS and contract agencies and between the department and the foster parents.

We pursued the series of meetings with these groups, be it case managers to case managers or case managers to foster parents.

We ran the report again today for our meeting and found that there were only 6 that were out of compliance, and of those 2 had been done but not entered in TN Kids.

That is a reduction from around 13 percent of the cases here, to around 3 percent.

This process of problem solving/conflict resolution works. The last report that came out showed Bradley County with no AFCARS errors, and no overdue Redeterminations of Child Welfare Benefits.

Your idea to implement a CQI approach was and remains a solid concept insofar as it is honestly pursued. The numbers help to tell the story. Way to go!!!

Elaine Hong has been the advocate for this process in Southeast, and she has been incredibly supportive. I think the reason this has worked so well in Bradley County is that our Team Leaders, Mary Elliot and Charlene Lawhorn have encouraged it in every way.

In the spirit of the process, neither of them have ever attended one of our meetings. They have absolutely been supportive and

not directive. They ask what they can do to help.

I told them to use their positions to let all CMs know that our weekly meetings were mandatory. They did what they were asked to do. But, more than the particulars, they are both very bright and capable women who appear to be very secure with who they are.

We have two teams at Bradley merged into one to do CQI work. And any of our case managers can go to either of them for direction on a case and not worry that either of them will be threatened by the switch, just whoever is available at the time. Amazingly, they seem to be conversant with each others cases – strange since each of them supervise between 80 and 100 cases. The other area in which I think they are unusual, and void of

Get Ready to Sign



2005

Annual Enrollment for Flexible Benefits for the Plan Year 2006 begins Nov 15, 2005 -Dec 1, 2005 for all Central State employees. Should you need assistance please contact the Financial Services Office at 1-877-681-0155 or (615) 741-3131. Enrollment forms may also be obtained at this web site:

www.treasury.state.tn.us

THE WRAP UP

Tennessee

Department of Children's Services

Viola Miller
Commissioner

Rob Johnson
Communications Director

Calista Doll
Communications AA

This Week's Contributors:

Frank Mix

Clifton Funk

India Pipkin

Wally Fowler

Eric Henderson

Vicky Puckett

ego issues, is that they know that I have good leadership skills, and rather than be threatened by me in any way.

They have encouraged me, given me guidance when I asked for it, been utterly supportive. They are clearly the supervisors, no doubt about it.

But they recognize the difference between supervision and leadership and clearly maintain the one function and encourage the other with those who can do it. It seems to me that this is the best way to get the most of the talents and abilities of those who work with you, and not stifle them because you are threatened by them.

In my experience, people like this are exceptional and deserve to be commended for the work they do.

Thanks,
Wally Fowler

FESTIVAL BY

THE LAKE

Sumner County D.C.S.

partners with

Hendersonville Rotary Club

On Saturday, October 8th, 2005 Sumner County foster parents and D.C.S. staff handed out free promotional give aways along with brochures providing a toll free contact number where information is given regarding how to foster children. The event was well attended and several contacts were made in the local community. It was a cool brisk morning and the event included a canoe race, and running race. Several vendors,

non-profit groups, military, police and other community businesses had display booths represented. The event is conducted yearly and provided a great opportunity for folks to recruit resource parents.

- Clifton Funk

WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE FOSTER FAMILY?

I am nominating Emily & Steve Sartain as my favorite foster parents. Emily and Steve have worked really hard for Marissa and Eve Schmitz. They treat these girls as their own children. They have made both girls feel apart of there family. They both are very involved in their foster children's education, medical needs and basic needs.

They have have gone far beyond basic for Marissa. They have attend seminars to learn about her disabilities on their own. They have gone to battle at IEP's meeting for Marrissa's education. I have even seen them become emotional at the IEP meeting because they thought the educational needs wouldn't be met.

I barely have to instruct the Sartains on what to do. They make all appointments, and I don't have to tell them too. They are hoping to adopt both girls if they become available for adoption. I can see the love they have for the children and how happy they make the children.

The most important things that stand out to me about the Sartains is that the children are made to feel a part of their family. The children are their family. They push the children to aim for success and don't let anything get them down. They enter the children in activities and have volunteered to transport other children with disabilities to func-

Dear Dr. Miller,

At our last OJT meeting, Valerie discussed the importance of providing feedback and encouragement to our mentors. We also discussed doing something "special" when someone seemed to be going above and beyond. I thought my something "special" would be to ask you all for a thank you.

While getting feedback from new employees I received the following excerpt in an e-mail. This is not the first time I've been told what a great job Amber does.

"I was lucky in that I had an OJT mentor, Amber Ball, who took her role very seriously. Amber sought me out and was dedicated to involving me in every aspect of the job. Her active involvement and advice best prepared me for this job. As situations arose on her caseload, Amber explained the policies and paperwork. However, not everyone received the same type of attention. And, of course, various situation did not arise during my time with Amber."

While I have thanked Amber myself, I know it would mean much more to hear it from one of you. If you can, could you please send Amber Ball, located in the Northeast King-sport Office, a thank you. I'd really appreciate it. If you'd like to copy her supervisor, her name is Sherry Embree.

Cheerfully,
Vicky Puckett

tion with them.

They also have a post-custody child with an amputated leg. They have pushed this child to pursue college, get a job, and help with a car. They have shown this young lady that just because you have a disability you don't have to depend on a disability check. Go forth with your life and focus towards your dreams. They have even helped her get a job at Domino's.

Also Mrs. Sartain and Eve entered a contest on the Food Network channel and won. They won a trip to New York City to be on Emeril Live. The show aired them on TV last week. How cool is that?

When I first got Marrissa she was wearing a feeding tube. Because the Sartains' help keeping up with medical needs she no longer has the feeding tube. Marrissa could barely say words when she came into custody. Now she is talking a lot. All of the teachers have stated without the extra help of the foster parents Marrissa wouldn't be as far in her education.

I really appreciate the Sartains and all their hard work, especially making my foster children feel apart of their family.

– India Pipkin

CORE LEADERSHIP: THE LATEST FROM THE CORDELL HULL

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner will not approve more than two people for training and one person should be from the field. Staff needs to ask for scholarships, if they want to attend trainings.

The Commissioner will not approve any travel authorities (TA's) that are not submitted at least 30 days in advance. We need to get our spending under control.

Overtime Report

Joe Cimino presented a handout on the Overtime Report followed by discussion.

Joe stated we are wasting money and we cannot continue to do this. Joe stated we are projecting \$2.2 million over budget for overtime (budget of \$5.8 million) but should be \$4-4.5 million in overtime given rightsizing and vacancies.

Judy Cole stated that the regions would be doing another rightsizing using CPS, Juvenile Justice, probation, and custody numbers.

East Region has shown progress in reducing overtime since July. Commissioner stated that we have to be careful that we do not send the message that we do not have overtime for direct services for children.

Joe Cimino will be looking at overtime for Central Office administration as well, because we serve as a role model for the regions.

Departmentwide Issues:

♣ Residential treatment

♣ Adoption (cost are greater in adoption than foster care)

♣ Overtime

We need to focus on increasing the IV-E penetration rate to 65%. We were at 33% and now we are at 55%. If we reduce length of stay by 6 days and reduce percent of children coming into custody by 6%, DCS would have \$13 million in savings. There is talk in Washington to turn this into capped entitlement and we would be fine if we were at maximum penetration rate of 65%. The Feds are suggesting that states develop reinvestment strategies. DCS has made the same suggestions to our private providers (develop reinvestment strategies).

We need to look at cost-shifting needs assessment dollars

We overspent in some areas but not in Needs Assessment dollars and we will not use this money to close out the fiscal year. The Commissioner stated she would not do this again.

We need a spending plan for Needs Assessment dollars. The regions may not have a clear understanding about needs assessment money and what to use it for or how to access it. Needs Assessment funds are to be used to move service programs forward and should be linked to the regional implementation plans. CFTM facilitators may not feel empowered to make decisions to use these funds.

Action Steps

Needs Assessment money is in the DPA's and fiscal directors in regions need to be part of this process to advise regional management how to spend this money.

We should involve regional resource and health unit staff in how and when to access Needs Assessment funds to be more solution focused.

♣ This will be added to the RA conference call agenda for November 2, 2005.

♣ Joe will contact regional fiscal agents to ask them to ensure that every CFTM facilitator knows how to access Needs Assessment dollars and what is covered.

♣ Randal Lea and Elizabeth Black will put together a "Whatever It Takes Campaign" for example, articles in the weekly update.

♣ Lane Simpson will pull cases for the last 5 kids that came into custody within a region and the IST will review these with the region. Elizabeth will forward this message to IST. The pull of cases should also include JJ as well.

♣ Tom Riss will take the lead on how to use Fiscal teams and CSA case managers on sharing the knowledge of available services and how to access them.

♣ Follow-up on Needs Assessment issue within a combined meeting of Domain V and VII. The meeting has been scheduled for 11/16/05 from 12:30 to 1:30 in 7A.

Quality casework – regions picking certain counties to focus on and partner with fiscal representation

Performance based Contracting

A meeting was held on October 31, 2005 with Chapin Hall, private providers and regions regarding performance based contracting.

TBI Meeting

Debra Valentine will meet with TBI to develop a proposal for another fingerprinting vendor. Identix continues to be problematic.

QSR Update

The Southwest Region QSR review was completed last week. Scheduling with JJ facilities will have to be planned more carefully, due to conflict with YDC treatment team meetings. We will have names of cases to review 8 weeks in advance to send to superintendents of YDC's in advance for any child who has been in a YDC at any point in their out of home care. The QSR is having an impact on JJ staff as well as the D/N staff. We would want to invite the YDC superintendents, YDC treatment directors, and the YDC group home directors to the QSR exit conference session.

Upper Cumberland QSR review has shadow availability for the week of November 14, 2005.

Announcements

Shalonda Cawthon is the new Executive Director of Child Safety.

Daryl Hilliard will be the new psychologist in the Southwest Region